

Dwight's Journal of Music.

WHOLE No. 621.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, JAN. 21, 1865.

VOL. XXIV. No. 22.

For Dwight's Journal of Music.

The First Opera.

A NOVELETTE OF THE PAST (1555).

Translated from the French of HECTOR BERLIOZ

By KATHARINE FRANCES M. RAYMOND.

ALFONSO DELLA VIOLA TO BENVENUTO CELLINI

Florence, July 27, 1555.

I am sad, Benvenuto; I am tired, disgusted; or rather, to tell the truth, I am ill; I feel myself growing thin, as you grew thin before you had revenged the death of Francesco. But you were soon cured, and will the day of my cure ever arrive? God knows. Yet what suffering is more deserving of pity than mine? To what unfortunate would Christ and his holy mother render more justice in according to him that sovereign remedy, that precious balm, which has most power to calm the bitter pains felt by an artist, outraged in art and in his person, vengeance? Oh no, Benvenuto, no; without wishing to deny your right to stab the miserable officer who had killed your brother, I cannot help placing an infinite distance between your offence and mine. What had that poor devil done, after all? Shed the blood of the son of your mother, it is true. But the officer was commanding a night round; Francesco was drunk; after having insulted and thrown stones at the detachment, without any reason, he even went so far, in his extravagance, as to try to carry off the soldiers' arms; they made use of them, and your brother perished. Nothing was more easy to foresee, and you must admit that nothing could have been more just.

But I am not in such a position. Although they have done worse than to kill me, I in no way deserved my fate; it was just when I had a right to reward, that I received insult and outrage.

You know with what perseverance I have striven for long years to increase the forces, to multiply the resources of music. Neither the ill will of the old masters, nor the stupid jokes of their pupils, nor the mistrust of the dilettanti, who look on me as an eccentric man, more nearly allied to folly than genius, nor the material obstacles of all kinds created by poverty, have been able to arrest me, as you know. I may say it, as in my eyes the merit of such a course is perfectly null.

The young Monteccho, named Romeo, whose adventures and tragic death made so much noise at Verona a few years ago, was certainly not able to resist the spell that attracted him to the lovely Giulietta, daughter of his mortal enemy. Passion was stronger than the insults of the Capuletti, stronger than the steel and the poison with which he was ceaselessly threatened; Giulietta loved him, and for the sake of an hour passed near her, he would have braved death a thousand times. Well! my Giulietta is music, and, by heaven! I am loved in return.

Two years ago, I formed the plan of a theatrical work unknown until now, in which singing, accompanied by various instruments, was to take the place of spoken language, and to awaken, by means of its union with the drama, impressions

such as even the highest poetry has not yet produced. Unfortunately, this project was very expensive; only a sovereign or a Jew could undertake to realize it.

All our Italian princes have heard of the bad effect of the pretended musical tragedy executed at Rome towards the end of the last century; the ill-success of the "Orfeo" of Angelo Politiano, another essay in the same style, is not unknown to them; and nothing would have been more useless than to request their aid in an enterprise in which old masters had so completely failed. I should have been taxed anew with pride and folly.

I did not think of the Jews for a moment; all that I could reasonably hope from them, was to be shown out, on the simple enunciation of my plan, without insult, or the hooting of the servants; besides, I did not know one sufficiently intelligent for me to count on so much generosity with certainty. I renounced hope, not without sorrow, you may believe; and with an oppressed heart I again returned to the obscure labors, by means of which I live, but which are only accomplished at the expense of those which would probably be rewarded by fame and fortune.

Another new idea began to trouble me soon after. Do not laugh at my discoveries, Cellini, and beware, above all, of comparing my young art to yours, long ago formed. You know enough of music to understand me. In good faith, do you believe that our heavy madrigals in four parts are the last degree of perfection to which composition and execution may attain? Does not good sense tell us, that, in regard to expression and musical form, these boasted works are mere childishness and stupidity?

The words express love, anger, jealousy, courage; but the melody, always the same, resembles the dull psalmody of the mendicant friars. Is this all that melody, harmony, rhythm, can accomplish? May there not be a thousand applications of these different parts of the art which are yet unknown to us? Does not an attentive examination of what is, lead us to a presentiment of what will and ought to be? And who has drawn all their power from the instruments? What is our miserable accompaniment, which does not dare to leave the voices, but continually follows them in the unison or octave? Does instrumental music, individually taken, exist? And in the manner of employing the voice, what prejudices, what routine! Why always sing in four parts, even when it is a person complaining of his isolation?

Is it possible to hear anything more unreasonable than the canzonets lately introduced in tragedies, where an actor, who speaks in his own name and appears alone on the stage, is nevertheless accompanied by three other voices placed behind the scenes, from whence they follow his voice as well or ill as they can?

Be sure, Benvenuto, that what our masters, intoxicated with their works, call the height of

art to-day, is as far from what will be called music in two or three centuries, as those monstrous little bipeds, made by children out of mud, are far from your sublime Perseus, or the Moses of Buonarrotti.

There are numberless modifications to be brought into an art as yet little advanced—it must yet make immense progress. And why should I not help to give the impulsion that will produce this?

But, without telling you of what my last invention consists, it will suffice for you to know that it was of such a nature, that it could be brought out with the aid of ordinary means, and without having recourse to the patronage of the rich or great. Only time was wanting, and, the work once finished, it would have been easy to find an opportunity of producing it during the festivals, which attract to Florence the elect among the noble and the lovers of art of all nations.

Well, here is the cause of the heavy and bitter anger which gnaws at my heart:

One morning, while I was busied on this singular composition, the success of which would have rendered me celebrated all over Europe, my Lord Galezzao, a confidant of the Grand Duke's, who, last year, much liked my scene of Ugolino, came to me and said:

"Alfonso, your day is come. There is no more question of madrigals, cantatas, or canzonets, Listen to me: the marriage festivals will be splendid, and nothing will be spared to give them a brilliancy worthy of the two illustrious families about to be allied; your last successes have created confidence; at they court they believe in you now.

"I knew of your plan of a tragedy set to music, and have spoken of it to my lord; your idea pleases him. Set to work, then, and may your dream become a reality! Write your lyric drama, and fear nothing as to its execution; the best singers of Rome and Milan will be ordered to Florence; the best virtuosos of every kind will be at your service; the prince is magnificent, he will refuse you nothing; if you equal what I expect from you, your triumph is certain and your fortune made."

I cannot describe what passed within me on hearing this unexpected intelligence. I remained silent and motionless. Astonishment and joy deprived me of speech and gave me the air and attitude of an idiot. Galeazzo understood the cause of my trouble, and, pressing my hand, said: "Adieu, Alfonso; you consent, do you not? You promise me to give up all other composition, to devote yourself exclusively to that which his highness demands of you? Remember that the marriage will take place in three months!" and, as I only answered by an affirmative movement of the head, without being able to speak, "Come, be calm, Vesuvius, adieu! To-morrow you will receive your engagement; it shall be signed this evening. It is a settled affair. Courage! We reckon on you."

When I was alone, it seemed to me that all the

cascades of Terni and Tivoli were seething in my head.

It was worse when I fully comprehended my good fortune, when I again pictured to myself the grandeur and beauty of my task. I throw myself on my libretto, which had been yellowing in a corner so long; I once more behold Paolo, Francesca, Dante, Virgil, the shadows and the damned; I hear that ravishing love sigh and complain; tender and graceful melodies, full of abandonment, melancholy, chaste passion, unroll themselves within me; the horrible cry of hatred of the outraged husband resounds; I see two corpses roll together at his feet; then I find the ever united souls of the two lovers, wandering and blown by the winds through the depths of the abyss; their plaintive voices mingle with the dull and distant noise of the infernal floods, with the hissing of flame, with the agonized cries of the unfortunate whom it pursues, with the frightful concert of eternal torment.

For three days, Cellini, I walked about without an object, in a continual vertigo; during three nights I was unable to sleep. It was only after this long attack of fever, that clear thought and the feeling of reality returned to me. I needed all this period of ardent and desperate struggle to conquer my imagination, and control my subject. At length I became the master of it.

In this immense frame, every part of the picture, in simple and logical order, revealed itself little by little, clothed in simple or brilliant colors, in half-tints or decided tone; human forms appeared, here full of life, there under the pale and cold aspect of death. The poetic idea, always submissive to the musical sense, was no obstacle; I strengthened, embellished, and enlarged one by means of the other. Finally I did what I would, as I would, and with so much ease, that at the end of the second month the entire work was finished.

I confess that I felt the need of repose; but in thinking over all the minute precautions which I must take in order to ensure the success of my work, vigor and vigilance returned to me. I superintended singers, musicians, copyists, machinists and decorators.

All was put in order with the most astonishing precision, and this gigantic musical machine was about to move majestically, when an unexpected blow broke the springs, and annihilated at once, the fine endeavors, and the legitimate hopes of your unhappy friend.

The grand duke, who of his own free will had requested this drama in music from me; who had made me neglect the other composition on which I counted to render my name popular; he whose gilded words had swollen the heart, and inflamed the imagination of an artist,—he plays with all this now; he tells this imagination to cool itself, this heart to calm itself or break; what does it matter to him! He is opposed, in short, to the performance of "Francesca;" the Milanese and Roman artists have been ordered to return home; my drama will not be placed on the stage; the grand duke does not want it any more; he has changed his mind. The crowd already assembled in Florence, attracted less by the splendor of the marriage festivities than by the interested curiosity awakened throughout Italy by the promise of a musical festival,—this crowd, hungry for new sensations, deceived in its expectations, inquires what may be the motive which thus bru-

tally deprives it of the spectacle it sought, and unable to discover it, does not hesitate to attribute it to the incapacity of the composer. Every one says: "This famous drama was absurd, no doubt; the grand duke, aware in time of the truth, is not willing that the powerless attempt of an ambitious artist should throw ridicule on the solemnity in preparation. It cannot be anything else. A prince does not break his word in this way. Della Viola is still the vain, extravagant fellow we knew him to be; his work was not presentable, and, out of regard for him, they abstain from saying so openly." Oh, Cellini! oh, my noble, proud, and worthy friend! Reflect an instant, and judge from yourself of what I must have suffered from this incredible abuse of power, this unheard of violation of the most formal promises, this horrible and unexpected affront, this insolent calumny on a production which no one in the world, save myself, knows yet.

What is to be done? What is to be said to the herd of imbecile cowards who laugh when they see me? Who is the author of this diabolical plot? and how to be revenged? Cellini! Cellini! why are you in France? why can I not see and ask advice, aid, and assistance from you? By Bacchus, they will make a madman of me! Cowardice! Shame! I feel the tears in my eyes. Away with all weakness! On the contrary, strength, attention, and coolness are indispensable to me; for I will revenge myself, Benvenuto, I will. When and how, matters not; but I will be revenged, I swear to you, and you will be content. Adieu! The fame of your new triumphs has reached us; I congratulate you, and rejoice with you on account of them, with all my soul. Heaven grant only, that king Francis may leave you sufficient time to answer your suffering and yet unrevenged friend!

ALFONSO DELLA VIOLA.

BENVENUTO TO ALFONSO.

Paris, Aug. 20th, 1555.

I admire, my dear Alfonso, the candor of your indignation. Mine is great, be convinced of that, but it is more calm. I have too often met with similar deceptions, to be astonished at what you have lately passed through. The trial of your youthful courage was rough, I allow, and the revolt of your soul against an insult so grave and so little deserved, is as just as it is natural. Your retired life, your meditations, your solitary labors, can teach you nothing of the intrigues that agitate the loftiest regions of art, or of the real character of men in power, who are too often the arbiters of an artist's destiny.

Some events in my own history, of which I have until now left you in ignorance, will suffice to throw some light on our position in general, and yours in particular.

I do not fear the effect of my story on your constancy; your character reassures me; I know it, I have studied it well. You will persevere, you will arrive at the goal in spite of every thing; you are a man of iron; and the stone aimed at your head by the low passions that lie hid on your road, far from bruising your forehead, will strike fire from it. Learn, then, all that I have suffered, and may these sad examples of the injustice of the great serve as a lesson to you.

The bishop of Salamanca, ambassador to Rome, had requested me to make a large ewer for him, the workmanship of which, extremely minute and

delicate, occupied me more than two months, while it had almost ruined me, in consequence of the enormous quantity of precious metal necessary to its composition. His Excellency was lavish in praise of the rare merit of my work, had it taken away, and left me for two whole months without mentioning anything more of the payment than if he had received an old saucepan, or a medal of Fioretti from me. Good fortune ordained that the vase should again fall into my hands for a small repair which it needed; I refused to give it up again.

The cursed prelate, after having covered me with insults, worthy of a priest and a Spaniard, tried to get from me a receipt for the sum which he still owed me; but as I am not a man to be taken in so coarse a trap, his Excellency sent his valets to attack my workshop. I expected the trick; so, when the rascals advanced to break down my door, Ascanio, Paulino and I, armed to the teeth, gave them such a reception, that the next day, thanks to my carbine and my long dagger, I was paid at last.*

Something worse happened to me afterwards, when I had made the celebrated button for the pope's cape, a piece of wonderful workmanship, which I cannot help describing to you. I had placed the large diamond precisely in the centre of the work, with the figure of God above, in so easy an attitude, that the jewel was not at all embarrassed by it, but a fine harmony resulted from it; he gave the blessing by raising his right hand. Below, I had grouped three little angels, who sustained him with upraised arms. The centre angel was in alto, the two others in basso-relievo. Round them were a number of other little angels arranged with other precious stones. God, the Deity, wore a floating mantle, from which issued cherubim and a thousand ornaments of admirable effect.

Clement the Seventh, full of enthusiasm when he saw the button, promised to give me all that I asked. But the affair stopped there; and as I refused to make a chalice for him which he asked from me besides, always without giving me the money, the good pope, become as furious as a wild beast, had me sent to prison for six weeks. That was all that I ever obtained from him.* I had not been at liberty a month, when I met Pompeo, the miserable goldsmith who had had the insolence to be jealous of me, and from whom I had for a long time defended my poor life with difficulty. I despised him too much to hate him; but, on seeing me, he affected an air of raillery that was not common to him, and which, embittered as I then was, I found it impossible to bear. At the first movement I made to strike him in the face, fear caused him to turn his head, and the dagger stroke hit him just above the ear. I only gave him two, but at the first he fell dead. It had not been my intention to kill him, but in such a state of mind as I was, who can be sure of his blows? And so, after having suffered an odious imprisonment, I was obliged to fly, because, under the impulse of the just anger caused by the avarice and bad faith of a pope, I had crushed a scorpion.

Paul the third, who overwhelmed me with commands of every kind, did not pay me for them more punctually than his predecessor; but, to make it appear as though I was in the wrong, he

* Historical.

invented an expedient worthy of him, and truly atrocious. My enemies, of whom I had a great number about his holiness, accused me one day to him, of having stolen the jewels belonging to pope Clement. Paul the third, who was well aware of the contrary, affected, notwithstanding, to believe me guilty, and had me shut up in the castle of Saint Angelo; in the fort which I had so well defended some years before, during the siege of Rome; under the ramparts from whence I had fired off more shots than all the cannoneers together, and from whence I had, to the pope's great joy, killed the constable of Bourbon. I succeeded in escaping. I reached the exterior walls; suspended to a rope above the moat, I invoke God, who knows the justice of my cause, and cry to him, as I let myself drop: "Help me, oh, Lord, since I help myself!" God does not hear me, and in my fall I injure a leg. Exhausted, dying, covered with blood, dragging myself along on my hands and knees, I reach the palace of my intimate friend, Cardinal Cornaro. This scoundrel traitorously gives me up to the pope, in order to obtain a bishopric.

Paul condemns me to death; then, as though he repented of putting too speedy an end to my tortures, orders me to be plunged in a fetid dungeon, filled with tarantulas and venomous insects; and only at the end of six months of such suffering does he, gorged with wine, in a night of orgy, accord my pardon to the French ambassador.*

Such, my dear Alfonso, are terrible sufferings, and persecutions difficult to support; do not imagine that the wound recently given to your self-love can yield you a just idea of it. Besides, does not an insult addressed to the work and the genius of the artist, appear more painful to you than an insult intended only as a personal one? And tell me if I failed to experience such a one, at the court of our admirable grand-duke, when I cast Perseus? You have not forgotten, I think, either the grotesque surnames which were bestowed on me, or the insolent sonnets which were placarded every night on my door, or the cabals by means of which they persuaded Cosimo that my new method of casting would not succeed, and that it was folly to confide the metal to me. Even here, at this brilliant French court, where I have made a fortune, where I am powerful and admired, have I not to struggle every instant, if not with my rivals (they are now disabled), at least with the king's favorite, Madame d' Etampes, who has taken a deep dislike to me, I cannot tell why? This wicked creature says all the bad things she possibly can of my works,* seeks, by a thousand means, to injure me in the opinion of his Majesty; and indeed, I begin to be so tired of hearing her constant barking on my trail, that were it not for a great work that I have recently undertaken, and from which I hope for more honor than I have obtained from my preceding works, I should be already on the road to Italy.

Go to! I have experienced every species of evil that fate can inflict upon an artist. And yet I am alive, and my glorious life is the torment of my enemies. And that I foresaw. And now I can overwhelm them with my contempt. This revenge marches slowly, it is true, but for the inspired man, sure of himself, patient and strong, it is certain. Think, Alfonso, I have been insulted more than a thousand times, and I have only

* Historical.

killed seven or eight men; and what men! I blush to think of it. Direct personal vengeance is a rare fruit, and not given to every one to gather. I never got the better of Clement the Seventh, Paul the Third, Cornaro, Cosimo, or of Madame d' Etampes, or of a hundred other powerful cowards; how then will you revenge yourself on this same Cosimo, this grand duke, this ridiculous Mæcenas, who knows no more about your music than my sculpture, and who has so stupidly offended both of us? At any rate, do not think of killing him; that would be undoubtedly folly, and would have by no means doubtful consequences. Become a great musician, and when your name is illustrious, should his silly vanity one day prompt him to offer you his favor, refuse it; accept nothing from him, and never do any thing for him. This is the advice I give you, this the promise I require of you; and, believe in my experience, it is also the only vengeance within your power.

I have just told you that the king of France, more generous and more noble than our Italian sovereigns, has enriched me; it is then for me, an artist who loves you, to keep the promise of the heartless and mindless prince who cannot understand you. I send you ten thousand crowns. With this sum, I think you may succeed in worthily mounting your musical drama; do not lose an instant. Let it be performed at Rome, Naples, Milan, Ferrara, anywhere but at Florence; not a ray of your glory must be reflected on the grand duke. Adieu, dear child; vengeance is fine, and for its sake one may perhaps be tempted to die; but art is far finer, and never forget, that in spite of all, we must live for that.

Your friend,

BENVENUTO CELLINI.

(Conclusion next time.)

For Dwight's Journal of Music.

An American Standard Diapason.

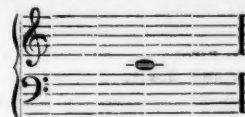
The observation has been made, wherever and whenever proper attention has been paid to the subject, that the *Musical Pitch* has been, and is still rising, through causes not sufficiently ascertained.

The following brief explanations may render this assertion more intelligible to the less initiated in musical science, (who nevertheless are invited to take an interest in this matter).

Sound.—Tone.—Pitch.

If by any means the air is put in motion, a *noise* is produced. If there is a continuity between such noise and our hearing apparatus, we *hear the noise*. Any thing audible, or perceptible by the sense of hearing, we call *sound*. If the motion of the air is produced by the vibrations of certain regularly shaped solid bodies, and the air is kept moving in regular vibrations, and if these vibrations are numerous enough within a certain given time, *tones* are produced. Each *tone*, then, is a *sound*, but not *vice versa*. This quality of a sound which renders it a *tone* is called *musical pitch*, for the discernible degree of height or lowness of a tone. The *pitch* of a tone is entirely dependent on the rapidity with which the vibrations of the air follow each other within a given time. We say a tone is higher in pitch than another, if it is the effect of a larger number of air-vibrations within the time of a second. About 500 vibrations of the air, for instance,—caused by a wire about 4 feet in length during a second of time—produce a tone, which we call in music the *once marked C*, or *tenor C*, which is the middle C on the piano-forte, and is represented by a note standing just above the lower, and just be-

low the upper staff in music, with an additional line through its head, thus:



Any tone higher than this is produced by more; any tone lower than this, by fewer vibrations in a second.

According to these explanations, neither time nor place should seem to have the power to create a change in the pitch of a given tone; and yet the fact is that in different times and places the middle C has been considered to be the result of from 480 to 560 vibrations of the air in a second; and, as above stated, there is still a rising tendency in pitch, where steps have not been taken to check it.

For the fact that this rise in the musical pitch has really taken place, abundant and undeniable proofs exist. Organs built one hundred years ago, or still farther back, are tuned to such a pitch that other instruments (wind or stringed) can hardly be tuned low enough to be fit to accompany them. In some instances the organ accompaniment has had to be transposed even a whole tone. Gluck's Operas, Handel's Oratorios, and the productions of their contemporaries, prove by the arrangement of the vocal parts that, at those remote times, the pitch must have been much lower. It occurs in them that the Bassi are required to sing the Tenor A. Moreover at the Grand Opera in Paris, a record is kept in regard to this rising tendency in the musical pitch, dated back as far as 1699, when for the middle C, four hundred and eighty vibrations were recorded. From 1699 until 1857, a period of one hundred and sixty years, the pitch of this tone had risen sixty vibrations per second, which is equal to three quarters of a tone; and in London, Petersburg and Berlin, the opera standard was at that time even higher by nearly twenty vibrations.

No one will deny that such a state of things can only be productive of very great inconveniences; nay, to some it must prove very annoying and detrimental; particularly as recent composers of the Italian school have, in spite of this already too high pitch, written vocal parts in their operas so enormously high that very few singers could or would attempt them. Besides this danger resulting from an enormously high pitch, to which all singers more or less have to expose themselves, the inconvenience to instrumentalists coming together from different countries in Europe for international mass performances, by the difference in pitch in their respective native countries, was felt so intensely that for more than thirty years it has been under consideration to settle this matter in some way satisfactory to all concerned.

The first proposition in regard to checking the rising tendency in the musical pitch, that has come to my knowledge, was made in the year 1830 by Dr. Muzenbecker, the president and director of a musical society in the city of Altona (Holstein). He gave, in one of his annually published reports on the progress of his society, a scientific deduction on the matter of pitch in general, and showed the necessity of devising means to regulate it by the introduction of a universal standard diapason.*

In 1832 an attempt was made by Broadwood, in London, to introduce a tuning fork for the Philharmonic Society in that metropolis, giving the middle C at five hundred and twenty vibrations per second.

In 1834 we find a number of German musicians, convened in Stuttgart, adopting a diapason or tuning fork, producing A (of the middle or once marked octave) by eight hundred and eighty vibrations;

* The word *diapason*, used in this connection, means a certain simple contrivance, in the shape of a steel fork or tube, for the purpose of producing a certain tone always of the same pitch. Most of the diapasons give the tone C or A.

which is equal to five hundred and twenty eight vibrations for the C of the same octave.

In 1842, Mr. Hullah introduced tuning forks in London, producing C at five hundred and twelve vibrations. The year 1858 was marked by an act of the French imperial government with a view to regulating the matter in question. A committee was appointed to inquire into the best mode of establishing a "Diapason Normal." Meyerbeer, Berlioz, Auber, Rossini, Halevy, and other distinguished musical men belonged to this committee, which, in 1859, presented its voluminous and highly interesting report.* In this report it was unanimously admitted that the standard of pitch in music differs very materially in different countries, and even among different musical establishments in the same country. It was stated that there still exists a tendency every where to a rising of pitch, and that great inconvenience and confusion must come of it.

Tuning forks from all parts of Europe had been collected by the committee; they had tested them and solicited opinions about their possessing the best requirements for a standard and normal Diapason. Finally they concluded that the wishes of nearly all musical people would be met by lowering the Paris Opera pitch about one half-tone. Consequent upon their recommendation to lower the Opera A fork from eight hundred and ninety-six to eight hundred and seventy vibrations per second (equivalent to lowering middle C from five hundred and thirty-eight to five hundred and twenty-two) a decree of the Emperor Napoleon sanctioned this standard pitch, and this "Diapason Normal" is now in force in France since July 1859. No musical instrument is admitted into public establishments, unless constructed and attuned to this standard. Besides having rendered a material service to all interested in musical matters, Napoleon in the meantime has created by this decree a new income to the state; as every instrument has to be marked by a government officer, to show that its maker has complied with the law, for which service of the officer a certain fee has to be paid to the government.

Since the introduction of this Standard Diapason in France, the same has been adopted by Russia, Austria, Saxony and some other minor states in Europe. In Vienna, Marschner's opera "The Templer and Jewess" (Ivanhoe) was the first performance (November 4, 1862), after the adoption of the new pitch in Austria.

Notwithstanding the political *entente cordiale* between France and England, they have not been able to agree in musical matters. In 1859, Henry Chester and Mr. Dilke, both members of the Council of the Society of Arts, suggested that the Society convene a conference of musical magnates, amateurs as well as professors, composers, instrument makers, vocalists and instrumentalists, to discuss the subject whether the Society should frame a resolution to have it extensively signed in favor of the newly adopted French Diapason. In the absence of any legal authority, such proceedings of the Society of Arts would be received as a kind of voluntary law, and public opinion, thus manifested, would lead the instrument makers to conform to that standard.

In a meeting called by the Society of Arts for this purpose on the 3d of June, 1859, a strong muster of musical men of all classes, (among whom was one lady, Mrs. Jenny Lind Goldschmidt,) was present, all agreed, like those meeting for the same purpose in other countries, that the pitch had been and was still rising; that a further rising should be checked, and that this could be accomplished only by the adoption of a Standard Diapason once for all. A committee was then nominated and charged with an examination of the subject. While this committee were engaged in their investigations, Sir John Her-

* This Report in full was printed in Vol. XV. of this Journal.—Ed.

schel sent to them a communication expressing his opinion in favor of adopting five hundred and twelve vibrations for middle C, instead of five hundred and twenty-two, adopted by the French, on account of its being better divisible for the C's of lower octaves (viz., two hundred and fifty-six, one hundred and twenty-eight, sixty-four and thirty-two.) In June, the committee reported. They had decided in favor of five hundred and twenty-eight vibrations per second for middle C, this being the Diapason established in 1834 by the Stuttgart musical conclave. The instruments generally could not well be brought down from five hundred and forty-six to five hundred and twelve, but easily to five hundred and twenty-eight, which is midway between the two. By a nearly unanimous vote this compromising step was sanctioned, and five hundred and twenty-eight vibrations thereby acknowledged to be the standard pitch for middle C in England at the present time.

Nobody will deny that matters on this side of the Atlantic are just as bad in regard to equality of musical pitch, as in Europe before the adoption of five hundred and twenty-two or five hundred and twenty-eight vibrations for middle C, and many will agree that a change with us in this respect might be acceptable.

As a first step toward accomplishing this object, the writer of this communication solicits the co-operation of his musical brethren throughout the United States, and the Canadas, requesting those who take an interest in the matter, to furnish him a written statement in regard to the pitch of several *keyed* instruments, or *orchestras* or *bands*, in their respective places of residence, according to the following model:

Statement of Pitch,

as ascertained in Chicago, (Ill.) in January, 1865.
by ——— Prof. of Music.

- 1 Organ at St. Mary's Episcopal Church.
Maker (H. C. Erben) of (New York), A 1-4 of a tone below accompanying fork.
- 2 Piano (grand), maker (Steinway Bro's New York), A 1-4 of a tone above accompanying fork.
- 3 Philharmonic orchestra. A 1-2 tone above accompanying fork.

Such statements from East and West, North and South, accompanied by the tuning forks according to which the pitch was ascertained, would give a true picture of the enormous variety in pitch in this country. The writer of these lines would publish, at some future time, the results of his experience in this matter, and would return, with thanks to their owners, the tuning forks, with a statement in regard to their Pitch, as compared with the new French five hundred and twenty-two vibration C, "Diapason Normal," imported by him from Paris.

EDWARD WIEBE.

Box 79, Brooklyn, (N. Y.) P. O.

Musical Correspondence.

NEW YORK, JAN. 15.—The second Symphonie Soirée given by Mr. THEODORE THOMAS, took place in Irving Hall, on the evening of the 7th. I enclose the programme.

- Symphony, No. 2, Op. 61, C.....Schumann.
1. Sostenuto assai.—Allegro ma non Troppo.
2. Scherzo.—Allegro vivace.
3. Adagio espressivo.
4. Allegro molto vivace.
Aria, "Di placer"—(La Gazza Ladra).....Rossini.
Mrs. Jennie Van Zandt.
Concerto for Piano, No. 5, Op. 78, E flat.....Beethoven.
1. Allegro. 2. Adagio un poco moto. 3. Rondo.
Mr. Carl Wolfsohn.

Toccata, F.....Bach.
Arranged for Grand Orchestra by H. Esser.
(First time in America.)

Aria, "Qui la voce"—(I Puritani).....Bellini.
Mrs. Jennie Van Zandt.

Fantasia, for Piano (Reminiscences of Robert le Diable.)
List.

Mr. Carl Wolfsohn.

Overture.—Euryanthe.....Weber.

The manner in which the orchestra played Schumann's Symphony betrayed the interest taken by the members in that most beautiful work. The first movement was taken a little too slow; but, on the contrary, the last movement was justly given in a slower tempo than we have been accustomed to hear it in New York; the effect was consequently that intended by Schumann; and the Allegro came out more clearly, and not less brilliantly. The beautiful Adagio was especially well rendered, and its details carefully brought out. The whole Symphony made a deep impression on the audience.

Bach's Toccata has been finely instrumented by Esser; to be sure, the rolling swell of the 32 foot pedal could not be altogether supplied by the basses; but the noble composition is, to say the least, unspoiled by its transportation to the orchestra and concert room.

Weber's *Euryanthe* overture was brilliantly played, as usual. Mrs. VAN ZANDT was the vocalist on this occasion. The lady has a naturally facile, but inexpressive and somewhat hard voice. She sang the two arias with piano-forte accompaniment.

Mr. CARL WOLFSOHN, the well-known pianist from Philadelphia, was the "guest" of the evening. This was, we believe, the gentleman's first appearance before a New York audience; his selection of Beethoven's Concerto showed that he aims at a high position among our virtuosos, and we must, of course, honor him for that aim; since Beethoven's piano-forte music is too seldom heard in our concert rooms. Mr. Wolfsohn has already attained considerable facility of execution, although his trill leaves something to be desired; his touch gives rather the impression of an industrious than a genial artist; his piano passages are neat and clear, rather than mellow; in his forte we miss breadth. Although Mr. Wolfsohn's rendering of the Concerto gave us a great deal of pleasure, we should have been better pleased, could we have more frequently lost sight of him and felt more impressively the true Beethoven spirit. The orchestra accompanied him admirably. The attempt to establish Italian buffo opera at Niblo's Garden has fallen through "for various reasons." The Philharmonic Society is now rehearsing Schumann's Symphony in B flat, Beethoven's "Egmont," and Gluck's "Iphigenia" overtures.

MASON'S and THOMAS'S soirées for classical chamber music, will commence here shortly. The first programme will include Beethoven's delightful Septet, a Sonata by Chopin for Piano and Violoncello, and Schumann's A-minor Quartet.

LANCELOT.

PHILADELPHIA, JAN. 15.—The season is at its height, and concerts follow one another so rapidly that it is difficult to keep the run of them.

I cannot forgo mentioning Mr. JARVIS'S performance of the Mendelssohn D-minor Concerto, in a recent public rehearsal of the Germania. His conception of the composition was truthful; his interpretation of it artistic. He never played better, and in the somewhat sentimental Adagio actually surprised some of his friends by the fine feeling with which he rendered it. The orchestral accompaniments were too loud. Were it not that the piano tone was of a different quality from those of all the other instruments, Mr. Jarvis's performance would have been drowned by the Germania. It is to be hoped that future artists may receive the benefit of more judicious accompaniment.

The Quintette Club gives its matinées weekly, and generally presents interesting programmes. As the gentlemen who compose the club probably expected more pleasure than profit from their enterprise, it may well be deemed successful.

Hitherto, classical concerts in this city have not been remarkable for crowded audiences. Now and then some extra attraction, in the shape of a favorite singer, would draw some of that large and estimable class that "don't like concerted music." The few who usually attend such entertainments are, for the greater part, well known to each other, and from this circumstance, a gathering of this kind occasionally bears some resemblance to a family party.

From some occult cause or other, the soirées of Messrs. CROSS & JARVIS are exceptional in this respect. With a programme on which there was no bait for the unmusical, there was a crowded house. The Foyer of the Academy was actually filled and, with the exception of some magpies from a notable boarding school, the audience seemed to enjoy the music. There can be no doubt that they applauded judiciously, since they showed their approbation of every thing but the Schumann Andante and variations, though these were well performed. Messrs. C. & J. deserve congratulations upon the fact of their great success.

This is the programme of their first soirée.

Trioin E flat. Schubert.
Paraphrase de Concert. "Midsummer Night's Dream." List.
Andante and Variations, for two pianos. Schumann.
Quintet in E flat (op. 16). Beethoven.

Mr. CARL SENTZ contemplates giving a series of Symphony concerts. Mindful of a concert in which Beethoven's Fifth Symphony drew an audience which scarcely outnumbered the orchestra, he has wisely chosen to secure a sufficient number of subscribers to insure the success of his undertaking. It will be well for all of us if he meets with the support so well deserved by him. JAQUINO.

PHILADELPHIA, JAN. 16.—The first of the series of CROSS & JARVIS's Classical Soirées was given on Saturday evening at the Foyer of the Academy.

[Programme in preceding letter.]

It is to be borne in mind that these concerts are intended to be as popular as possible for entertainments of this character. The aristocratic and exclusive tendencies of classical music in general, are to a great extent disregarded; and with the purpose in view of dismissing the audiences in as pleasant a frame of mind as may be, the arrangers of the programmes eschew the more severe of the musical classics, and introduce matter of which the above well-known items are fair specimens.

Somewhat difficult is it, indeed, to write anything new of these compositions, so thoroughly familiar as they are to the musical world;—though one may refer to the performers in place of any reference to the music. So it is worth while to chronicle the universally expressed opinion that Mr. Jarvis never played so well, despite a "Steck" piano. The performance of Mr. Gaertner was in marked contrast to his fine playing of the ever welcome though secular-classical "Fesca No. 2," or of "Rode's" Concerto at the Quintette Club matinée at the Assembly Buildings on Wednesday last,—and,—to anticipate,—to what, it is believed, will be his equally artistic rendering of the "Kreutzer" Sonata of Beethoven, with Mr. Jarvis, at this week's matinée.

The well known Beethoven quartet for piano and wind instruments, which seems to have been, and naturally enough, a great favorite of the composer, was creditably rendered. The opportunities presented to wind instrumentalists for performances of this music, are so unfrequent, that one may hardly look for a perfect performance even though the parts are filled by thoroughly skilful artists. I augur a happy result, if the concert-attending public,—that public that rushes so readily to hear Gottschalk & Co. bang away at the inveterate "Faust" march on five grand pianos,—can be induced to patronize the matinées of the Quintette Club in great numbers. But progress in these matters is especially slow, and classical concerts, but a recent novelty in Philadelphia, have yet many obstacles to overcome in the way to substantial popularity.

Mr. WOLFSOHN's next soirée will shortly take place. It is one of the greatest pleasures a real lover of the art can anticipate. Mr. Wolfsohn's character as a conscientiously true musician, is a guarantee to all who have a true feeling for the highest and best in that art, that nothing will ever be done by him to inspire aught but the most elevating sentiments. It is gratifying to know of this gentleman's recent very successful appearance in New York. His cordial reception there was a deserved testimony to his great ability and eminent talent. I may refer, in this connection, and with approbation, to a series of "Album Leaves," by Mr. Wolfsohn, recently published by André, and dedicated to Miss Mary Howell of this city. They are all very creditable to the composer, and it is allowing much, to say that each is up to its subject. I beg to commend them to the notice of your readers,—suggesting as a trifle of criticism, the propriety of exchanging the titles of the last two of them.

Recent advices from across the water report our old friend and artist, Mr. CARL HOHNSTOCK, —whose violin, I trust, I may hear once at least, before all earthly sounds shall cease to echo in these ears,—physically and musically flourishing.

Admirers of superior church music may be greatly gratified by a visit to St. Stephen's Church in this city. The choir is composed of very excellent material, and justice is done here, where the most flagrant injustice is so generally perpetrated elsewhere. The soprano is Miss SOLLIDAY, whose voice and method are of the finest, and especially adapted to the requirements of sacred music. I recall with much pleasure and satisfaction this lady's singing of "He shall feed his flocks," at the performance of the "Messiah" last winter, and great was my regret after anticipating the pleasure of hearing it from her lips, that a lady so inferior to her in voice and style, should be intrusted with "I know that my Redeemer liveth." While upon the subject, might I suggest a more than probable benefit to the public from the republication of a short article on "Church Music," signed "J. S. D.," and originally published in one of the numbers of the "Christian Examiner" for the year 1836?

MERCUTIO.

CHICAGO, JAN. 10.—As you are not overburdened with correspondents from this place, I propose contributing my portion. "Grover's German Opera Troupe" is "all the go;" and having gone to hear them in "Faust," "Don Giovanni," and "Der Freischütz," I wish to "speak my sentiments."

But before commencing, I would say that "Faust" is the only opera to be repeated. Now manager Grover knows his own business, but I doubt that this repetition is in accordance with the musical taste of our people. The performance of "Don Giovanni" and of "Freischütz" was good enough to satisfy even critical Boston; indeed it is safe to say that the rendering of "Freischütz," by the troupe is unequalled in the annals of opera in the West. (I profess to know good music when I hear it). Grau's apology for an opera is now glaringly absurd; let him not repeat the infliction.

Having carefully listened to "Faust," I conclude that the instrumentation is the most elaborate treatise on the art of modulation ever heard out here. Now if this is superior to the treatment of "Giovanni," "Freischütz," and other operas of the older German masters, then have I been misled and fooled by my teachers.

To-night we are to have "Fidelio," and we anticipate a rich treat. The orchestra under Anschütz is good; there is a bassoonist among the performers who excels any performer on that instrument I have ever heard.

The state of Church Music, so-called, in Chicago, is nothing to boast of. Most of our organists are sadly in want of a teacher. They will roar you Ver-

di like any nightingale. Baumbach, Knopfel, McCurdy and Byrd constitute the pick.

Our Opera House is fast approaching completion, and when finished will be a very great addition to the town. MUSICUS.

CHICAGO, JAN. 14. Grover's Opera Troupe has just closed its second week here, there being one week more of a musical feast such as Chicago has never before enjoyed. The orchestra and chorus are all that can be desired, and we have rarely had a better company of leading artists.

The operas presented are, with a few exceptions, new in Chicago, and have been put upon the stage in a fine manner.

The first week opened with the ever pleasing *Martha*, and was followed by *Faust*, *Dame Blanche*, *Don Giovanni*, *La Juive* and *Stradella*. *Faust*, *Don Giovanni* and *La Juive* drew crowded houses,—*La Dame Blanche* had the smallest audience of the season.

This week we have had crowded houses to hear *Der Freyschütz*, *Fidelio*, *Robert*, *Faust* again, and *Tannhäuser*. To-night we are to have *Martha* once more, with "A Night in Grenada" at the Matinée. *Der Freyschütz*, *Fidelio* and *Tannhäuser* were the chief attractions, and were brought out in a superb manner.

For a wonder, the artists have all been in good voice, with the exception of FORMES, whose once noble organ is evidently failing him. HERMANS, HABELMAN and HIMMER are superior artists, and have made themselves great favorites here,—while FREDERICI and JOHANNSEN, by their powerful and graceful acting and fine voices, have established no ordinary claims. Frederici, as Margaret in *Faust*, Agatha in the *Freyschütz*, and Alice in *Robert*, has displayed great dramatic talent, and a splendid voice and execution, worthy of the first artists of the day. TAMARO, STEINECKE, LEHMANN, GRAFF, CANISSA, and DZIUBA have also acquitted themselves very creditably in their respective roles!

Too much praise cannot be awarded to the superb orchestra and chorus, which under the able direction of CARL ANSCHÜTZ have gained for themselves unbounded applause and admiration.

Next week, the last of the season, opens with the "Barber of Seville" and the "Magic Flute," which will undoubtedly be brought out in a fine manner. We hope that this will not be the last time that Mr. Grover favors us. CHICAGO.

Music Abroad.

Paris.

THEATRE ITALIEN.—We have already spoken of the successful debut of Brignoli, which was more than confirmed in his second appearance. Here is the opinion of *La France Musicale*, of Dec. 1864, as translated in the *Philadelphia Bulletin*:—

Brignoli wanted not an ordinary success, but a triumph, such as he obtained among the Americans of the North. He must feel satisfied. His second appearance, which took place on Wednesday last, in *Don Pasquale*, was truly an event. Mario, in his best days, never sang the serenade better, and that piece, it must be remembered, was the favorite one of that tenor. In the rest of the role Brignoli completely outstrips him. He must be heard in the duo with Mlle. Patti, as well as in the quatuor. What charm in his voice, and what power of expression! But, let us add, what gratification, what jubilee for the appreciators of fine singing!

We have stated with what sweetness he sang the serenade; all we could add would convey but a feeble idea of the enthusiasm he produced.

To the soft murmur of approbation which served as an accompaniment to his singing, succeeded the warmest and most enthusiastic applause, and after being twice recalled, Brignoli had to sing over that admirable melody. He had been recalled after the duo in the first act, as well as after the quatuor in the second; he was called for again with his companion artists, after the rondo finale, which Mlle. Patti carried with dazzling effect.

The part of Norina, we have repeatedly stated, suits admirably this young Diva. This last representation has given new proof of it; it is impossible to sing it with more spirit. We could not state how often she was recalled; but we can assert the fact that at no time since the opening of the season did she exercise such a fascination.

The duo of Scalsee and Delle Sedie was encored. It was but just. Those two artists are in every respect irreproachable. To conclude, *Don Pasquale* left no room for criticism, and will undoubtedly be an epoch during the present season.

(Signed)

E. ESCUDIER.

The "Société des Concerts du Conservatoire" gave its second extra concert Dec. 17. The programme was as follows:—

Symphonie No. 28, en Sol..... Haydn.
 Psalme à Double Chœur..... Mendelssohn.
 Concerto en si bémol pour piano..... Beethoven.
 (Solo de Piano, par M. Théodore Ritter.)

Ave Verum (Chœur)..... Mozart.
 Symphonie en Ut mineur..... Beethoven.

M. Pasdeloup inaugurated the second series of popular concerts on the same day. The programme included Beethoven's *Entr' Actes* to "Egmont" and Mr. Wallace's charming overture to "Lorelei," which was as successful as at the previous concert. The Opéra Comique announces "Le Capitaine Henriot" for next week, and at the end of the year we are to have a new theatre opened on the recently constructed Boulevard Richard Lenoir, near the Bastille. Vaudeville, Drame, Comédie, and Operette are to be given. Two performances daily are announced, and the prices are very low: the dearest places being 1fr. 25c. M. Offenbach's "La Belle Héloïse" was given on Saturday at the Variétés with doubtful effect.

VIENNA.—Mlle. Ariôt commenced a starring engagement, on the 10th Nov., at the Imperial Opera-house. The part she selected for her first appearance was that of Angela in Auber's *Domino Noir*. The local papers praise her singing, but say that in her acting she is inferior to Mlle. Wildaur. The engagement of Mlle. Ariôt is about the sole present fact worthy of being recorded in connection with the Imperial Opera house. According to report, the management intend to produce shortly in addition to Löwe's *Concino Concino*, Spontini's *Vestalin*, with Madame Dustmann, Mlle. Bettelheim, and Herr Schmid, in the principal characters. Should the report be true, the Imperial German Opera will possess as satisfactory a repertory as can possibly be desired; for among their stock pieces will be *Die Vestalin*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Euryanthe*, *Fidelio*, *Don Juan*, *Die Hochzeit des Figaro*, *Das Nachtlager, Die Zauberflöte*, *Jessonda*, *Der Wasserträger*, etc.

The first Philharmonic Concert, under the direction of Herr Dessoff, opened with Mendelssohn's magnificent overture to *Athalie*. This was succeeded by Bach's antique "Suite" in D; and Beethoven's Symphony in C minor. The whole concert went off splendidly, though Bach's "Suite" did not, it is true, meet with quite the reception it deserved. At the first concert to be given in the Imperial Redouten-Saal by the Society of the Friends of Music, under the direction of Herr Herbeck, the attraction was to be Handel's oratorio of *Judas Macabæus*, the principal parts being sustained by Madame Wilt; Mlles. Seehofer and Waldmann; Herren Walter and Panzer. The Society will give four ordinary concerts this season, and produce the following interesting and classical pieces: new "Suite" in E minor by Franz Lachner, under whose personal direction it will be performed; the "Sanctus," never before heard here, from Bach's Grand mass in B minor; two scenes from Franz Schubert's opera: *Fiera brava*; a Fantasia on Schubert's "Wanderer;" and F. Liszt's "Ungarische Rhapsodien," performed by Herr Taussig; a Violin Concerto, with orchestra, played by Herr Joachim; and several smaller instrumental pieces. At the two extraordinary concerts given by the Society, on the 18th of December, and on Shrove Tuesday, 1865, the works performed were to be Beethoven's Grand Mass in A, and Bach's *Matthäuspassion*. Dr. Gunz, of Hanover was engaged to sing the tenor music in the last.

Leipzig.

GEWANDHAUS CONCERTS. In the eighth concert the orchestral pieces were Haydn's E-flat Symphony (the one with the roll of the drum), and the "Dance of the Spirits of the Blessed" and the "Furies' Dance" from Gluck's *Orpheus*. Fräulein Julie von Asten, from Vienna, played Beethoven's first piano Concerto (in C), a *Nocturne* by Schumann, and a *Scherzo* by Mendelssohn,—in a manner refined and musical, rather than dazzling, we are told. The

singer was Fr. von Edelsberg, from the court opera at Munich, a contralto of rich, extensive voice, dramatic instinct, but more dash than schooling; she sang airs by Mozart and Pergolesi, and *Lieder* by Schumann. She seems to have been more successful at the Leipzig theatre in the parts of Romeo, Rosina and Nancy.

Schumann's *Manfred* overture and Beethoven's 4th Symphony were the orchestral features of the ninth concert. The pianist Lübeck, of Paris, played Mendelssohn's G-minor Concerto, with more of virtuosity (it seems) than feeling; also "own compositions" and a *Tarantelle* by Heller. Herr Dagele, of the Dresden opera, sang arias from Marschner's *Hans Heiling* and Boieldieu's *Jean de Paris*.

The tenth Gewandhaus concert, just before Christmas was devoted to a couple of choral works: Reinecke's "Belshazzar," and Mendelssohn's "Walpurgisnacht." Of the former, the *Orchestra's* correspondent writes:

Herr Kapellmeister Reinecke's cantata, which was first produced two years ago, has for its subject the last days of Belshazzar's life, the text being written by Fr. Rober; both in words and construction this text is miserably inferior to the simple grandeur of the Bible narrative, besides violating historic truth and probability. Successful as Herr Reinecke has been in works where his thorough command of form and instrumentation were employed to illustrate graceful and elegant ideas, his style is less suited to subjects where strength and grandeur are required. The cantata consists of an overture and eleven numbers. The overture seems intended to depict the arrogance and tyranny of the Babylonians, and the longing for release of the oppressed Israelites, the latter being suggested by the introduction of an ancient Hebrew melody. The construction and instrumentation of this overture are excellent. No. 1 is a chorus of Babylonians, who are taking part in a wild orgy, and ascribe divine honors to the king; the music is spirited; the almost savage exclamations, "Belshazzar ist Gott!" contrast well with the fugal treatment of the words with which the people urge each other on to still wilder revelry; a remarkable effect, too, is gained by the introduction of the theme afterwards heard accompanying the handwriting on the wall, and which, whenever it is heard, seems for a time to check the blasphemy and revelry of the people. In the midst of this wildness, a very graceful melody for the soprano solo, afterwards repeated by the female chorus, represents the women of the royal harem paying homage to their king and god. These "dark-eyed" beauties seem to be very closely related to the hours and gipsies of whom Schumann has sung. In No. 2, Belshazzar asserts his divinity, and orders the sacred vessels of the Hebrews to be brought to add to the splendor of the banquet table. Musically this number is not very successful; the tone is somewhat commonplace. No. 3 brings the prophet Daniel before us. Nowhere throughout the cantata is this great character worthily treated by the composer. It is difficult to imagine why, when the prophet is expressing his righteous indignation, and is calling down the fires of heaven to consume the blasphemers, he is made to speak in the form of a short and by no means spirited recitative. A short contralto recitative leads to No. 4, a prayer for help uttered by the Israelites. This is the gem of the cantata, and is a beautiful composition; even by itself it would be most effective. In No. 5, in some very clever canon writing, the Babylonians demand that the Israelites shall be forced to join in the worship of Belshazzar. This is also an excellent piece of choral composition. The next number is given to an Israelitess and a chorus of her people, who express their determination to die rather than apostatize. No. 7 consists of a double chorus (Babylonians and Israelites) and tenor solo (Daniel). The musical construction is elaborate, but the result is hardly commensurate with the labor expended upon it. The subject of the part in which the Israelites call upon their God to awake and deliver them (the Babylonians meanwhile defying Belshazzar, and calling for the destruction of the captive people), is of too familiar a cast to express the character of prayer to an Almighty Being. No. 8, containing the scene of the miraculous handwriting, ought to have been the culminating point of the cantata; but to do it justice, requires a composer with qualifications the very opposite of those which Herr Reinecke possesses. The means by which the awful terror of the scene are depicted are far too stagey. The writer of the text has here gone very awkwardly to work; he makes Daniel appear as if he had been present during the whole

of the banquet. Quite out of keeping, too, with the character of the Jews, is the next number (9), a lament for Belshazzar—sorrow for the sufferings of one's foes was reserved for a purer religion to teach. The music, however, is good. In the following numbers (10 and 11) the author has been guilty of a strong violation of historic truth; he makes the restoration of the Jews follow immediately upon the death of Belshazzar. Daniel, in a recitative and *arioso*, proclaims the freedom of his people, who, in the final chorus, express their joy at the prospect of their return to Canaan. This chorus is written with much spirit, and contains an excellent double fugue. Should Herr Reinecke again attempt a choral work, it is much to be desired that he should choose a subject the prevailing tone of which is lyrical or elegiac. Should he do this, I have very little doubt that he would produce a work that would live; whereas, in "Belshazzar," the weakness of what should have been the grandest scenes will, I fear, act as a bar to its frequent repetition, and thus prevent much that is really of high merit from being appreciated as it deserves.

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, JAN. 21, 1865.

Concerts.

MENDELSSOHN QUINTETTE CLUB. The second concert (Tuesday evening, Jan. 17) was particularly enjoyable; and there were a goodly number to enjoy it, in spite of the snow-storm. Mendelssohn's early Quintet in A, written in the same year with the "Midsummer Night's Dream" overture, at the age of sixteen, carried us back to the early days of the Quintette Club, and sounded delightfully buoyant, fresh and clear. The first Allegro is in the vein of the "Heimkehr" overture and the opening of the Italian Symphony; the Scherzo is one of his earliest and happiest visitations from the fairies. The instruments went together well and well together. The novelty of the evening was the Quartet in E (No. 2 of op. 41) by Schumann; a charming composition, thoroughly clear and genial, though a much lighter work (excepting the Finale, *Allegro molto vivace*) than the two which the Club gave us a year or two ago. The first Allegro is pleasantly suggestive in its simplicity and brevity; the *Andante quasi variazione* (why quasi?) is full of originality, and interesting, sometimes startling transformation and development. This too sounded finely on the strings. WULF FRIES played a fantastic and yet tasteful *Reverie* for violoncello, by Bergner, in his finest style and feeling. Mrs. H. M. SMITH's clear and sweet soprano, and her chaste and honest style of singing, albeit a little cold, gave general pleasure. Her selections, too, were excellent: a noble Mozart song, that of Sextus from the "Clemenza di Tito" ("Parto, ma tu ben mio"); "My dream of life is over," by Spohr; and Schubert's "Hark, hark, the lark," in which he has caught the very ecstasy of Shakspeare's strain;—all well accompanied by string quartet with clarinet.

ORCHESTRAL UNION. Orchestral concerts after all! Let us be thankful, though it be on a small scale. The first was given in the Music Hall last Wednesday afternoon, at rather short notice, or the audience would doubtless have been larger. The band is about the same as last year, with four violins on each part. In the opening piece, the only one our engagements allowed us to hear, the instruments sounded remarkably well together. The selections, too, were good: for an overture, that fine concert one in A by Julius Rietz; for a Symphony, Gade's in B flat:—both of them novelties of last year. The rest was lighter miscellany. Can we not have two good overtures each time, one solid classical, one light?—especially now that the orchestra is "uncoupled" from the Great Organ, and is making music purely on its own account.

MR. J. C. D. PARKER'S SINGING CLUB. Invited

audiences, such as one only sees on choice occasions, have filled Chickering's Hall on the last two Monday evenings, to listen to some of the very best of amateur singing, in choral compositions by the highest masters. The voices are more numerous (about thirty) and better even than in former years, and their singing was so admirable, so pure, refined, well blended, nicely shaded and euphonious, as to reflect the highest credit on their devoted teacher and themselves.

The first piece was a noble Choral by Bach, harmonized as Bach alone could do it, unaccompanied, very impressive. It went particularly well the second time. Then came Mendelssohn's beautiful Hymn: "Hear my prayer," the soprano solo sung by a young lady, lately returned from studies in Europe, with finely cultivated voice and style. Then a couple of capital part songs: "Hunter's Song," by Schumann, and "The Nightingale," by Mendelssohn.

But the chief subject of the winter's practice has been Schumann's Cantata, "The Rose's Pilgrimage." The poem is quite a touching and imaginative little romance, relating how the Rose longed to be like the maidens, and to love and be loved, and how the fairies granted her wish and let her try it. The ideas are beautiful, and the translation shows here and there fine touches of a poet's practiced hand. We would fain copy it entire, but for its length. There is much fine music in it, though as a whole it is far inferior to "Paradise and the Peri." Often the inspiration flags; the long narrative recitatives, given to the tenor, seem monotonous and forced, making the singer's task not a grateful one. So too, several long stretches of dialogue. But there are some exquisite choruses, such as the light ones of the Fairies, the chorus of Hunters (as fresh and ringing as that in *Preciosa*), the funeral chorus, and "O happy time," with its solemn, pensive hopefulness. The opening soprano solo, duet and trio about Spring are delicately Spring-like, and were charmingly sung.

All the music of the Rose is beautiful; and we wish we had words to convey our sense of the truly musical, artistic, heart-felt, womanly style in which it was sung by a lady whose retirement from public life is a perpetual theme of regret with music lovers. Among all our native singers, we know no voice so musically bright and sympathetic, so fresh in its maturity, no art so simple and so perfect, no clearer instance of fine musical feeling. Here was the *spirit* of Schumann's melody completely realized. Our comfort is, that what is lost to the concert room comes back to the musical community in another way, that, namely of wise and quickening influence upon eager troupes of pupils. We can scarcely speak less warmly of a short contralto solo by Mrs. J. S. CARY (we may mention *her*); it was a gem of song. If other nice contributions are not named, it is not because they did not deserve it. The accompaniments were very tastefully played by Mr. Parker on a most melodious Chickering "Grand."

We must again reluctantly postpone our review of the Great Organ concerts, notices of new music received, welcome to a whole crop of new musical journals lately sprung up in New York, and many other matters.

Italian Opera.

The first week closed, as it began, with pieces quite familiar to opera-goers. Nor did the week offer any thing very notable, except that performance of *Don Giovanni*, which we have already said was an uncommonly good one. But this was not saying that it was the best we had ever had here, or that any one rôle in it had not been better filled before. Admitting that Bellini's Don and Morensi's Elvira do not suffer by comparison with any of their predecessors, who will say that the very effective Donna Anna of Carozzi is yet equal to that of Grisi, or La-

grange; that Kellogg in Zerlina is as beautiful as Bosio, Sontag or Patti; that Susini has not been many times outdone in Leporello; or that Lotti in Ottavio can make us forget Mario or Habelmann? But Maretzek does well to announce it again for the *matinée* of to-day; for as a whole it is one of his most successful productions. If he will only restore one or more of those missing arias, which belong to the very best part of the music, the success will be still greater; indeed such completeness would count more, in our estimation, than the acquisition of the best of singers in any one part.

We willingly take the word of others for it, that *Il Trovatore* was performed as well as it deserved and better too. There can be no doubt that Carozzi and Morensi, Massimiliani and Bellini would do it well. Gounod's *Faust*, on Friday, made one of the best of occasions for Miss KELLOGG, who is in remarkably good voice this time, not only as to flexibility and sweetness, but also as to substance, roundness, power of tone, and whose Gretchen everybody must admire, even if it have not all the natural and native charm of Frederici's. LOTTI can sing sweetly, but lacks presence, magnetism, force, for Faust. The part of Mephisto suddenly fell to the lot of BELLINI, who sang the music glibly and with all his might, but not subtly or Mephistophelishly, while he looked the bravo rather than the polite, intellectual fiend. He won those unstinted plaudits which mere intensity and vigor are so sure of in a distinctively Italian Opera audience. The pretty little part of Siebel was very nicely filled, both in voice and person, by Mlle. MORENSI. The same young lady, in the following day performance, left very little to be desired in the music or impersonation of Maffeo Orsini; rich and well trained in voice, graceful in person, true to character throughout. In singing she has much improved. With CAROZZI and BELLINI as the Duchess and the Duke, with LOTTI's tasteful if not powerful singing, and with good ensemble generally, the old charm of *Lucrezia Borgia* did not fail.

The second week (last week) was wholly occupied with the two novelties of the repertoire, except Saturday's *matinée*, which brought *Faust* again. The first of these novelties (if anything, by Donizetti now can be a novelty) was Maretzek's great card in New York, his famous "twelve-thousand dollar" piece, which ran "twelve nights" there, "*Don Sebastiano*." This we had on Monday, Tuesday and Friday evenings. It is the last but one or two in the list of Donizetti's 64 operas, and was composed at Paris in 1843, for the Grand Opera. The rapid composer, happiest in his least studied efforts, laid himself out here, and sought to produce something larger, more elaborate, learned, finished than before. He had trouble enough with it; manager and singers plagued him in rehearsals; the piece utterly failed before the public. It is said that this was the beginning of the melancholy, followed by the insanity, which lasted till his death in 1847. Probably the piece was not judged fairly at that first performance.

We can give only an honest impression from two hearings of the opera. We think "*Don Sebastiano*" is by no means the worst, nor yet the best of Donizetti's operas. In real musical interest, invention, beauty, it will not compare with *Lucrezia Borgia*; it seems less inspired in the same degree that it is more elaborate. To us it lacks, save in certain passages, the genial element, which makes *Lucrezia*, and even so light a work as *L'Elisir d'Amore*, more sure and more worthy of immortality. Great men, like Mozart and Beethoven, and Rossini too, are genial in all, even their most serious works; Donizetti can be genial in light efforts, but grow solemnly tedious, feebly, painfully intense, when they strain themselves to do great things. In "*Don Sebastiano*" there are large, involved, ingenious combinations; a few concerted pieces, like the Septet (or Quartet, eked out with ejaculations from bystanders) in the

fourth act, the funeral march, &c., in the third, which are effective and imposing; there are conscientious and nice traits of instrumentation; there are a few, and but a few, taking bits of song, neither of them first-rate or in a particularly new vein; but there is more, much more of music which is coarse and noisy, brassy and fatiguing, where physical intensity of effort seeks to hide intrinsic feebleness and lack of inspiration.

The general result of the whole is heaviness, unedifying, unrefreshing. You do not go away from it feeling better, feeling lifted up and lighter, stronger, with new life and faith in you, as you do after the most serious and yet most cheerful of all operas, *Fidelio*. It carries the house by storm sometimes, and you sit there cold and unmoved as you might under a loud-voiced, rhetorical, physically-forcible revival preacher, all too eager to be carried away if possible, yet experiencing no transport, never losing yourself in it, and rather demoralized and stultified than blessed or quickened by all this desperate assault upon your sensibilities; and yet how often have they yielded, unsuspectingly and sweetly, to a mere whiff of playful melody out of the musical heart and brain of a genius like Mozart! But we have been describing the whole modern fashion of Italian opera. Perhaps the most genial touch in "*Don Sebastiano*" is the little *Zitti*, *Zitti*-like trio, sung *sotto voce*, just before the end. The bare-*role* (serenade), sung by BELLINI, in the part of Camoens; the well-known tenor air of the king: "*Deserto in terra*," finely sung by MASSIMILIANI, a duet between these two, a duet between the king and Zaida, the Arabian girl, and much of the music of the latter, in which CAROZZI-ZUCCHI sang and acted finely (in spite of that unheard of, shall we say hermaphrodite sort of costume), are among the best things in it that appeal by beauty and expression, rather than by weight and grandeur. As a whole we find *Don Sebastiano* heavy. Fortunately, its music does not haunt us. Of the performance, including the scenical splendors, we can speak in high praise.

Far more enjoyable was the light and playful *Fra Diavolo* of Auber, in the Italian dress he gave it a few years ago. It is a charming opera and wears as well as ever. By no means equal to another light French opera which we have lately been enjoying, the *La Dame Blanche* of Boieldieu. There is more heart and feeling in *La Dame Blanche*; more that is sincere and earnest. Equally bright and graceful, equally light and unpretending, it goes deeper. Auber is fairly characterized in these words of a German critic:

"Auber wants for a complete genius the heart of Boieldieu. He has *esprit* enough for three Frenchmen, and melodies worthy of the richest Italian. He is elegant as an Athenian, and as full of imagination as a Southerner; but deep passion he is as little capable of feeling as expressing; in this he distinguishes himself from Meyerbeer merely by the fact that he does not *try* to express any. He often lacks in unity and grandeur of song, but he supplies this want by elegance and richness. Auber is an individuality, a French individuality, and even in his orchestration he has the precision, the clearness, the sparkling, many-colored quality of the French mind, but at the same time its superficiality and limitation. As a spring breeze merely stirs the surface of the lake to gentle ripples, so the music of Auber merely moves the surface of our sensibility."

There is no need to speak of the musical, the comical, the melo-dramatic qualities of *Fra Diavolo*, made familiar, long ago, to us by the Seguin, by the Louisa Pyne and other English troupes. Suffice it to say, that it never was so capably done for us before. Orchestra, chorus, principal singers and actors—all but one—were as nearly perfect as we could wish. It all flowed and sparkled musically, naturally, clearly; all entered into the humor of the thing delightfully; and it was picturesque from first to last. The one drawback was, that Herr LOTTI could not by any miracle of art swell to the dimensions, vocal, personal, or histrionic, of the daring brigand chief.

That was not his fault; he won respect by his painstaking fidelity to just conceptions of the part and by several pieces of sweet and tasteful singing. But for Miss KELLOGG this Zerlina was just the part; it suits her far better than the other Zerlina, sweetly as she sang that also. This was in all respects a capital performance, as naive, natural and lively as could be wished; as pretty and as graceful; while her principal melodies, and the highly florid, graceful bravura piece, full of rapidly descending scales, in the chamber scene, was of the purest and most liquid sort of vocalization. BELLINI, in grotesque make-up, voice and action, caricatured the travelling English *milord*, after the continental tradition, to a charm; it was inimitably droll. Mlle. MORENSI looked and sang the handsome young *milady* capitally also. And there was no end of true Italian brigand by-play and clever mimicry in DUBREUIL and WEINLICH. In short, *Fra Diavolo* is the thing which this company do the best, and, after *Don Giovanni* (a long way after), it is the best thing they do. It was given on Wednesday and Thursday of last week, and on Monday of this week, and the week is filled out with *Ernani*, *La Fille du Regiment*, *Lucia*, *Don Sebastian*, and *Don Giovanni*.

A DESERVED COMPLIMENT.—Mr. J. Q. WETHERBEE, one of the best vocal artists and teachers in our city, and a gentleman of high character and culture, not long since honored with the diploma of the Royal Academy of Music, in London, has received the following flattering note from the Old South Society, accompanied by a handsome New Year's gift:—

Boston Jan. 24, 1865.

"J. Q. Wetherbee, Esq. :—

"Dear Sir.—At a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Old South Society, held this day, before the transaction of the regular business of the meeting, conversation was had in reference to the Old South choir, and a cheerful recognition of their services was expressed by all the members of the committee present. And they desire to say to you, that during the nearly eight years of your connection with them as conductor of music in the Old South, they have had the highest appreciation of your excellence in the whole matter;—and especially do they desire to say, that during the six months last past the singing on the Sabbath has been uniformly better than at any former period. The committee would also add, that they have enjoyed their intercourse with you as a Christian gentleman, and are happy to have, as the conductor of so important a part of the religious services of Sunday, one for whom they cherish so much regard, and in whose moral character they can place so much confidence. They need not speak in this connection of your reputation in your profession, for that the community know and appreciate as well as ourselves.

"Please accept the enclosed sum, as a slight expression of the kind regards of the committee.

"George Homer, Chairman.

"Jabez C. Howe, Charles Blake, Simon G. Cheever, Joshua B. Kimball, Increase S. Withington, Samuel Coverly, Samuel Johnson, William Hilton.

"Loring Lothrop, Clerk of the Corporation.

VICTOR SCHÖLCHER. Among the deputation from the British Emancipation Society, who waited upon the American Minister to offer their congratulations on the re-election of President Lincoln, was the biographer of Handel, who, as every true lover of great and generous music naturally must be, is a friend of freedom and humanity. The London correspondent of the *Independent* says of him:

There was one man present at the interview with Mr. Adams, of whom I should like to say a word or two. I refer to Victor Schœlcher, formerly Under Minister of Marine in the French Provisional Government of 1848. Mr. Schœlcher suffers greatly in his bodily health, and his public appearances are, therefore, few and far between. He is a Republican, and has been an exile since the *coup d'état*. He is a scholar no less than a politician, and his "Life of Handel" has given him a conspicuous place in the ranks of literary men and musical critics. Need I say more to enlist your sympathy? But I can say very much more. To him more than to any other man in France is due that noble act of the Provisional Government which emancipated the slaves of the French colonies. He framed the measure and gave it effect; and, through good and evil report, he has been true to this cause during the weary years of his exile. Victor Schœlcher is the Wilberforce of France; and, although Imperial usurpation may defraud him, while living, of the homage which is his due, it requires no prophet to foresee that posterity will be more eager to erect his statue than that of the hero of the 2d of December.

Mr. HERMANN DAUM.—Once more, and very earnestly, we beg our readers hereabouts not to forget the Complimentary Benefit Concert to be given to this gentleman by a large number of his fellow artists. Seldom are such compliment and such benefit more justly due; for it is the case of a musician of right pure and earnest purpose, loyal to the noblest models, accomplished as an interpreter of the classics of his art, faithful as a teacher, amiable and esteemed wherever known, relying on his art and pupils for support, and now for the larger part of the year past precluded from all professional activity by a most painful and exhausting illness.

The time of the concert is fixed for next Saturday evening, Jan. 28, at the Boston Music Hall. The names of the artists who have volunteered their services are guaranty enough of an excellent entertainment. They are: the Orpheus Musical Society, led by Mr. KREISSMANN; the Mendelssohn Quintette Club; Miss HOUSTON and Miss RYAN, as solo singers; Mr. LANG and Mr. DOWNS, as pianists; and Messrs. PAINE, TUCKERMAN, WILLCOX and THAYER, as performers on the Great Organ.

SACRED CONCERTS.—Two concerts of church music ("grand" of course, like everything else in these days) are in preparation at our Music Hall. The first, to-morrow evening, is under the direction of Dr. S. P. TUCKERMAN, and will engage the choir of St. Paul's, the choir boys of the Church of the Advent, Mrs. SMITH, Mrs. FISK, Mrs. GILBERT, Mr. WHITNEY, and Mr. POWERS, as vocalists, and Mr. GEORGE WHITING, the new organist of King's Chapel. The selections will be interesting, of a similar character with former concerts of Dr. Tuckerman, and partly historical, including the famous *Miserere* of the pope's chapel.

The second, on the 7th of February, will be a repetition of the late "Choral Festival" at Trinity Church, New York, under the direction of Dr. CUTLER, who brings with him his famous choir boys, and other valuable assistants. The whole solemnity, as we understand, will be literally (as far as possible) re-transacted in front of our Great Organ. We had the pleasure a few days since of hearing Master COKER, the leading choir boy of Trinity, and must say that it is the most remarkable boy soprano that we ever heard, in point of beauty, power, expression, even development and training. From such a voice, (with such a talent), could it only last, what might not be expected!

CHOICE SPECIMENS OF TRANSLATION.—Did you ever compare the Italian with the English in the librettos sold at the Italian Opera? It is amusing. In the book of "Don Sebastiano," for instance, the line:

Già d'Imen le faci splendono.

(Already the torches of Hymen shine),

is thus ingeniously turned: "The faces were resplending from love!" "Signor clemente e pio" is rendered: "Mild and pious Sir!"

HARTFORD, CONN.—The "Beethoven Society," which performed the "Messiah" during Christmas week, numbers, we are told, over 200 intelligent vocalists, mostly of the *élite* of Hartford, and is conducted by Mr. BARNETT, an Englishman long resident in this country, a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, London. He is an earnest, thorough musician, perhaps too modest for his brassy age in music as in all things. Under his direction, the Society last year gave the "Elijah" twice, and with great success. No other "provincial" town has yet had the courage to attempt a work so difficult. Such aspirations surely must bear good fruit, and help to make our people truly musical.—Apropos of the performance of the "Messiah," we may print the following testimonial, which speaks for itself:

HARTFORD, Dec. 30th, 1864.—At a meeting of the Board of Conductors of the Beethoven Society held on the evening of Dec. 30th, 1864, Dr. C. A. GULMETTE, of Boston, was elected an honorary member for life without fee.

WILLIAM HILLS,
Secretary Beethoven Society.

Special Notices.

DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF THE LATEST MUSIC.

Published by Oliver Ditson & Co.

Vocal, with Piano Accompaniment.

Beauties of Don Sebastian. Donizetti.
The night is serene (La notte è serena). Barcarole. 40
While on earth lonely. (In terra solo). Song 30
Lisbon dear, at length I see thee. (O Lisbona, alfin ti miro.) Song 40
O happy day! O day of pleasure! (O fausta di! Suprema gioia!) Duet. 40
"Don Sebastian" is most known as an opera of splendid pageants and tableaux, but contains, nevertheless, a good number of gems of song. The first, mentioned above, is a charming serenade, sung by Camoëns before the King's prison. The second is widely known and used, the third is the singer's welcome to his native city, and the fourth is the duet between Don Sebastian and Camoëns. All are of standard merit. Two favorite instrumental pieces are noticed below.

When you and I were soldier boys. Song.
J. G. Clark. 30
A reminiscence of war scenes. Good for "Johnny" to sing, in the months and years after he "comes marching home."

Instrumental.

Beauties of Don Sebastian.
March Funebre. (Funeral march). 30
Pas des Esclaves. 35
The first piece mentioned, is the impressive march, heard and witnessed by the returned king, who had the gratification of being present at his own funeral. The second belongs to the scenes in Africa.

Choice Morceaux from Beethoven's Symphonies.
Arr. for Organ, by Batiste.
Communion. Andante. Fifth Symphony. 50
Op. 32. No. 2.
An organ is surely the next best thing after an orchestra, for Beethoven's immortal works. This is a skilful arrangement, and the set are well worth having.

Social Pastime. Violin and Piano. S. Winner.
Sultan's Polka. 30
Peabody Schottische. 30
Easy and pretty airs.

Radieuse. Grande valse de Concert. Seven Octaves. 1.50
Another production of this powerful composer, whose fictitious name illustrates the breadth of his genius.

Bridal Wreath Polka. A. P. Lighthill. 30
Pretty and original.

Books.

TECHNICAL STUDIES FOR THE PIANOFORTE.
By Louis Plaidy. Professor of the Pianoforte at the Conservatorium of Leipsic. Published with American, and also with Foreign fingering. 2.00

These truly valuable studies are extensively used by teachers, yet many, doubtless, have not heard of them. They are by an eminently practical man, and contain, in addition to a very sensible theory of piano study, exercises in scales, five finger runs, arpeggios, thirds, sixths, and octave passages of all possible variety, and all carefully fingered. Few will wish to use all of them, but one can select just what he wants from them.

MUSIC BY MAIL.—Music is sent by mail, the expense being two cents for every four ounces, or fraction thereof. Persons at a distance will find the conveyance a saving of time and expense in obtaining supplies. Books can also be sent at double these rates.

